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**GROUP 3600**

BS99-191

**PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of:

WILLIAMS ET AL.

Serial No.: 09/531,571

Filed: March 20, 2000

For: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR  
NOTIFYING AN ELECTRIC  
BILLING VENDOR OF A  
CUSTOMER STATUS CHANGE

Art Unit: 3624

Examiner: PATEL, Jagdish

**RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed on March 16, 2004, Applicants hereby provisionally elect, with traverse, to prosecute the claims of Group 1 (claims 1-10) in the present application.

However, applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement since the subject matter of all of claims 1-32 is sufficiently related that a thorough and complete search for the subject matter of the elected claims would necessarily encompass a thorough and complete search for the subject matter of the non-elected claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the restriction requirement be withdrawn and that the present application be examined according to MPEP § 803 so as to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to the Applicants and improper duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

Serial No.: 09/531,571  
Art Unit: 3624

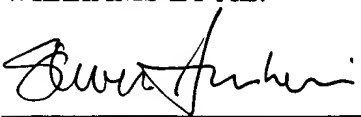
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SHAW PITTMAN LLP  
1650 Tysons Boulevard  
McLean, VA 22102  
Tel: 703/770-7687

Date: April 16, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAMS ET AL.

By:   
Steven P. Arnheim  
Registration No. 43,475

SPA:kmh

Document #: 1280409 v.1